



California Water Plan Plenary Breakout Session: Progress Report

10:00pm – 12:00pm

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Greetings

Megan Fidell, Department of Water Resources, opened the Progress Report Breakout Session, and invited participants to introduce themselves.

Overview of Progress Report

Megan Fidell, DWR, reviewed the power point presentation, available online. She explained that the Progress Report is reporting on whether the 2009 objectives are being implemented; the Progress Report will be a standalone document that summarizes progress toward the 13 objectives and 115 actions outlined in Chapter 7 of Volume 1 of the California Water Plan – Update 2009.

Have 7 of 13 Objectives back

- 1. Expand Integrated Regional Water Management**
- 2. Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently**
- 3. Expand Conjunctive Management of Multiple Supplies**
- 4. Protect Surface Water and Groundwater Quality**
- 5. Expand Environmental Stewardship**
- 6. Practice Integrated Flood Management**
- 7. Manage a Sustainable California Delta**
- 8. Prepare Prevention, Response, and Recovery Plans**
- 9. Reduce Energy Consumption of Water Systems and Uses**
- 10. Improve Data and Analysis for Decision-making**
- 11. Invest in New Water Technology**
- 12. Improve Tribal Water and Natural Resources**
- 13. Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits**

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Questions of Clarification

Ms. Fidell, DWR, opened the floor for questions of clarification.

Question: I need a little clarification, when I became involved in Update 2009, one concept that was being touted was basin independence. Can you tell me if basin independence made it into the objectives or actions for the Progress Report?

Answer: Ms. Fidell said she does not recall, off the top of her head, whether basin self-sufficiency is included as an action, but it may be under the objective for Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently.

Question: Are you looking to perpetuate these recommendations into 2013?

Answer: The recommendations for Update 2013 are not finalized at this time. Ms. Fidell continued by saying, I am speaking from what I have heard, this is not official Water Plan policy, but I think the next round of actions should be more concrete and measurable. Sarah Sol, DWR, reiterated her understanding that the Progress Report is a way of checking on what the recommendations need to be and whether the current recommendations should be maintained, solidified, or dropped.

Question: What kind of grade would you give the progress toward achieving 2009 recommendations based on what you've heard so far?

Answer: Ms. Fidell said that is the next thing I am going to ask you, the participants in this session. What should I do with this information, how should I roll it up and summarize it? Right now, I can tell you it is all over the map; you will see the information I have received and hopefully you can help me figure out how to draw conclusions.

Question: If we are interested in objectives that are not back yet, what should we do?

Answer: Ms. Fidell encouraged participation in future collaborative efforts to obtain feedback. Hoa Ly, DWR, told participants to contact Ms. Fidell or Ms. Ly if they can help provide information on progress toward objectives. She said staff would really appreciate getting the right people involved to help fill things out.

Question: Is it possible that we may not roll up to a grade this time, might we provide a non-standardized report?

Answer: Dan McManus, DWR, said that is a good idea because it is difficult to boil all of this down to a grade. Ms. Fidell explained that some caucuses also felt the need to report with a degree of academic rigor that may not be necessary. We did not initially write the objectives or actions to be measured this way so that is part of the challenge, which we hope to address in future iterations.

Presentation of Objectives and Results

Ms. Fidell outlined the posters for the 8 objectives that have been reported to date. She explained there are posters for each objective, each row represents a separate action under that objective, and each column outlines a portion of the reporting categories. The columns include: time frame, new programs, on-going efforts status, on-going efforts trend, on-going efforts area, barriers or constraints, recommendations for Update 2013 objectives and actions, and future reporting metrics. She asked participants to stand up and review the posters around the room. Ms. Fidell asked participants to provide ideas on a post-it note or to write directly on the posters.

Question: When you are talking about grades, which resonate with people, the Delta Foundation has a nice rubric.

Answer: Ms. Fidell said we borrowed much of that work.

Comment: It is difficult to feel comfortable grading on these objectives statewide, but we might be able to grade more comfortably if we break it down by region. Each region may be more comfortable grading at that scale.

Ms. Fidell asked the group, now that you have seen the spreadsheets, what do you think about this effort?

Comments:

- It is all over the place.
- It will be hard to give it a grade, we were talking about the tribal objective, and how it would be hard to give a statewide grade
- I enjoyed looking at the activities column, that might be useful.
- I think there has been work that has been going on in the last few months
- This is wonderful, what is the use of talking about the Water Plan if you can't measure the progress. I don't think you can give a grade. I'm with the PUC and I have to do grades for myself every 5 years. This is a very difficult, but necessary, task. If nothing else this is still
- I had to concentrate on one objective. My general contribution for Water Quality, whenever one of my small water systems has a problem it goes to a state database; there has been a lot of effort over the last few years to consolidate that into one database. That would be a good system to tap into regarding Groundwater, Saltwater intrusion, etc. That information is out there, but it is a matter of getting into the right database at CDPH. I ran into John Marshack at SWRCB; it is his job to integrate that data, but it would be good to make his job more well known to integrate the data.
- It is difficult to feel comfortable grading on these objectives statewide, but we might be able to grade more comfortably if we break it down by region. Each region may be more comfortable grading at that scale. There are some important differences between the issues that vary in relevance from Northern California to Southern California.

- Some things are statewide, Climate Change rep.
- Do a road show, get it out to the public. We wish we could tell you more about your region, but nobody is telling us about your region. Maybe people will be
- Sarah, There are other objectives in the Regional Reports as well, which may not be included in this.
- Mention a caveat that this is based on the information we have.

In this Progress Report, we are working from 2009, which we realize (in retrospect) was not set up to do this.

Comments:

- A lot of these are rather difficult to quantify. Some are very specific, such as reduce beach closures by 25%. Where they are quantifiable the progress should show the numbers.
- Objective #6 is practically done, Flood has it, we just need to get it to you.

Obviously the next thing is to get everything back. Once I have everything back, how do I consolidate the data. When you talk about a Progress Report, people intuitively think about a report card, which resonates with them. Can we do this with this information, and if I'm going to try to break these into 5 categories then how do I do that. Can I say there is a difference between a B and a C; one thing I've considered is good, neutral, bad. How do

Question: I keep wondering whether it needs a grade; it is a progress Report, not a report card. If it reports progress then it does what it says it would do. I think a check, plus, minus might work well. It would be difficult to define what a positive outcome is relative to a negative outcome.

Answer: We could do sized arrows, colors, etc. There are ways to do graphics.

Comments:

- There are a dozen different ways you can do the quantification on individual levels; I don't think, weighting.
- You need to be able to say whether California is doing a great job, or a poor job. I think we are not doing very well and we are probably in crisis mode. The Water Plan should do that. I think you do need to grade it so there is a clear and concise message. If we don't do something dramatically different we will go to war and we will collapse over it.
- I agree with making it clear, but even if DWR were to say that I think the state is in crisis and things are going very poorly. I don't know who would say what the general grade is. Why would the opinion of DWR matter more than anyone else. (Sarah Sol)
- If there is disagreement over the state of water in California then that is something good to say to at least be clear about what we know. Have it reference down; you can't sit and read this thing linearly; say what your disagreements are.

Ms. Fidell noted the existence of two separate questions we need to be thinking about.

1. Is the CWP being implemented?
2. Is implementing the CWP enough to address the potential crisis that exists?

Comments:

- That is part of the problem; I thought the Water Plan was a way to manage water in California. I thought that was great because I didn't think they did that in California. I think we get stuck in the weeds and we think the bigger the book the better the plan.
- In bulletin 118, they used to rank the basins and they ranked it based on the information they had. If it was really good information it was a 3, if it was old studies then it is a 2, and if it is theory then it is a 1. I think evaluating the quality of the data was useful.

Question: When did the Water Plan Start?

Answer: The Water Plan began with Bulletin 3 in 1957.

Question: What are we grading?

Answer: Just the recommendations from 2009 to today, so the progress over the last 4 years.

Question: We talked about developing a scorecard or a Progress Report for the Water Plan, but how are we going to be able to do that; maybe it doesn't deserve a score, maybe that is a broad brush, too broad a brush. Putting a score on it may not work.

Answer: One

Question: There is a report card by Delta Vision and some of us feel the grades are inappropriate. Using this as a progress report rather than a grade takes the baseline into account. We may have worked a lot on something

Answer: One thing this does is create a baseline for future work.

Comment: Don't give it an A, B, or C; I would rather know: Where did we start, where we are at, and where are we going?

Ms. Fidell asked the group whether the spreadsheets around the room support that sort of report out?

The group said YES.

Comments:

- Some recommendations take a lot more time to complete than others.
- We should make it intuitive; a lot of us have not been with this for 20 years. Most people these days; if it does not grab them in a few seconds then it is irrelevant.
- Talk about what we do know.

- The other thing about grades is that the media and legislators latch onto them. Be thoughtful about the storyline.
- On the funding side, I am a fed, and inflated statements can take groups out of the running or move them up on the priority line.
- If it is not written then it didn't happen. Tell it like it is. What I have not heard is we are the public. When I am trying to explain it to my neighbor then I want to be able to say A, B or C.
- How many people in CA know we are short of water? Bulletin 160-93 was the first time we said it and we have not said it since.
- People in Northern California would say there is plenty of water.
- There is no talk about conservation and that is the problem.
- It might help me at least; I thought about using different terms. When I write a plan for the EPA. The components are the broad brush and the commitments are the little, actionable, things I am going to actually do, and that I want to make sure are measurable.

Ms. Fidell asked for other comments on the Progress Report, and how it should be completed?

Comments:

- I think writing a gigantic matrix would look really good, but it may mask the fact that we are uncertain.
- I work for Supply and Balances at DWR, and I'm from Northern California, and I'm worried.
- I'm in Southern California and I work for the Federal Government and I'm very worried.
- Don't give the public the misimpression that we are certain when we are not.
- I asked how we are doing and you hesitated; if we are not ok we need to be able to say that.
- Would there be a way to lump things to the objective level? Some things are ok, and some need work. I'm leery of assigning A's and F's.
- I think some groups didn't know they would be graded, so maybe we use text this time, out of fairness.
- I hear that people respond to F's and I hear that people get overwhelmed by too much specificity. I think the grade only becomes important if you are trying to achieve an outcome by doing this and motivate something in particular. (Sarah Sol)
- I think a lot of excellent suggestions have already been made. Here are places we know, and here is what we know. Here are the things we maybe know and here are the things we don't know.
- Don't give too good of a grade if you are giving it to the legislature.
- You have your work cut out for you, and I applaud whatever effort you make.

Lessons Learned

Acknowledging the challenge this Progress Report has presented thus far, Ms. Fidell asked participants to reflect on this process and share lessons learned for next time. Ms. Fidell asked: having looked at the old objectives and actions, what are the take-aways we should consider when writing objectives for

2013. One view is that these are unreportable, they are vague and they need to be measurable and concrete. Another view is that we should not dial our recommendations back to measurable things if what we need in California's strategic water plan are visionary statements.

Comments:

- I see a middle. You can do performance metrics. We like things that are measurable. Does the Water Plan, as a tool, want to go into that level of detail. That is a DWR decision or a stakeholder decision.
- There are a ton of people that are not very familiar with the process and they need a trail to follow. 90% of the people will read 13 things and not the rest. It becomes a game; you can always manipulate the data.
- Not just scientists want to see data; taxpayers also want to see data. Where is the accountability and transparency. Everything that we receive funding for needs to be reportable. It makes a stronger case.
- I asked who the audience for the Progress Report is, and one audience (I was told), was the legislature. We need to have a story we can tell them.
- We are headed for a train wreck, and we need to be thoughtful of the story we tell.
- When I entered into the Water Plan I thought it was a whitewash. I think we are doing it all backwards and we are making a huge mistake. I think we are going to be the next one on Jared Diamond's list that a big disaster will happen and we should be turning the boat.
- A lot of this comes down to difficult political decisions and politicians don't want to go there because it doesn't get them reelected. This work is advisory, but at least it is collaborative.
- Remember, politicians make decisions based on the crisis of the day.
- Historically, we are not risk management, we are crisis management.
- The variability within California complicates this evaluation.

Question: Does the Progress Report come out for review?

Answer: We are not sure how the timeline will unfold. Keep an eye on the eNews for more information. We would also like to obtain contact information for people here today so we can provide updates.

Comment: It is difficult to feel comfortable grading on these objectives statewide, but we might be able to grade more comfortably if we break it down by region. Each region may be more comfortable grading at that scale.

Adjourn

Ms. Fidell thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.